

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1, 9, 18, 21, and 22 have been amended, without prejudice, for grammatical purposes. The Specification has been amended, without prejudice, in a similar manner to correct typographical and grammatical errors. Applicant submits that no new matter has been introduced into the application by way of this amendment, and further that the amended claims have neither been broadened nor more limited by the grammatical amendments.

In the Office Action, claims 18-20 and 22 have been allowed and claims 3-13 and 16-17 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were stated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the based claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1-2, 14-15, and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,839,168 (Kobayashi). Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this reference because Applicant's claim for foreign priority in the present application pre-dates Kobayashi. Specifically, the present application claims priority to Japanese Patent No. 2003-92072, filed March 28, 2003, which is earlier than Kobayashi's filing date of June 17, 2003. Pursuant to section 201.15 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure and 37 C.F.R. §

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Application No.: 10/808,154

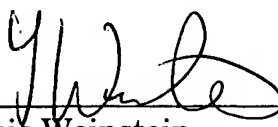
1.55(a)(4), Applicant has provided a certified English translation of Japanese Patent No. 2003-92072 accompanying this Reply to overcome this rejection.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the § 102(e) claim rejections. Applicant respectfully submits that the present application, including claims 1-22, is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, or that a telephone interview will help to materially advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure